AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A fluid dynamic bearing assembly that provides improved axial alignment and reduced operating thrust gap variation comprising:

a sleeve having at least one set of asymmetric journal bearing grooves thereon;

a shaft adjacent the sleeve and having a regulating region facing at least a portion of the asymmetric journal bearing grooves, wherein when the shaft and the sleeve are aligned, the regulating region and the asymmetric journal bearing grooves generate nominal net journal asymmetry pressure and when the shaft and the sleeve are not aligned the regulating region and the asymmetric bearing grooves generate increased journal asymmetry pressure or decreased journal asymmetry pressure.

Claim 2 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 1, wherein the regulating region is a regulating groove or step.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 2, wherein the regulating groove increases the journal gap such that the pumping action is diminished for the facing portion of the journal bearing grooves.

Claim 4 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 1, wherein there are two sets of asymmetric bearing grooves.

Claim 5 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 1, further comprising at least one set of symmetric journal bearing grooves.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A fluid dynamic bearing assembly that provides improved axial alignment and reduced operating thrust gap variation comprising:

a shaft having at least one set of asymmetric journal bearing grooves thereon;

a sleeve adjacent the shaft and having a regulating region facing at least a portion of the asymmetric journal bearing grooves, wherein when the sleeve and the shaft are aligned, the regulating region and the asymmetric journal bearing grooves generate nominal net journal asymmetry pressure and when the shaft and

the sleeve are not aligned the regulating region and the asymmetric bearing grooves generate increased net journal asymmetry pressure or decreased nominal net journal asymmetry pressure.

Claim 7 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 6, wherein the regulating region is a regulating groove or step.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 7, wherein the regulating groove or step increases the journal gap such that the pumping action is disabled for the facing portion of the journal bearing grooves.

Claim 9 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 6, wherein there are two sets of asymmetric bearing grooves.

Claim 10 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 6, further comprising at least one set of symmetric bearing grooves.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A fluid dynamic bearing assembly comprising:

a shaft; and

a sleeve adjacent the shaft; wherein one of the shaft or the sleeve has at least one set of asymmetric journal bearing grooves thereon; wherein the other of the shaft or the sleeve has regulating means facing at least a portion of the asymmetric journal bearing grooves for axially aligning the sleeve with the shaft; and wherein when the sleeve and the shaft are aligned, the regulating means and the asymmetric journal bearing grooves generate nominal net journal asymmetry pressure and when the shaft and the sleeve are not aligned the regulating means and the asymmetric bearing grooves do not generate nominal net journal asymmetry pressure.

Claim 12 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 11, wherein the regulating means is a regulating groove or step.

Claim 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 11, wherein there are two sets of asymmetric bearing grooves.

Claim 15 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 11, further comprising at least one set of symmetric bearing grooves.

Claim 16 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 11, wherein the asymmetric bearing grooves are located on the sleeve and the regulating means is located on the shaft.

Claim 17 (original): The fluid dynamic bearing assembly of claim 11, wherein the asymmetric bearing grooves are located on the shaft and the regulating means is located on the sleeve.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method for providing axial displacement feedback between a shaft and a sleeve defining a fluid dynamic bearing assembly, comprising;

providing at least one set of asymmetric bearing grooves on either the shaft or the sleeve; and

axially aligning the sleeve with the shaft by providing a regulating means facing at least a portion of the asymmetric journal bearing grooves, ~~for axially aligning the sleeve with the shaft~~; wherein when the sleeve and the shaft are aligned, the regulating means and the asymmetric bearing grooves have nominal net asymmetry and when the shaft and the sleeve are not aligned the regulating means and the asymmetric bearing grooves generate increased or decreased net asymmetry pressure.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 18, wherein the regulating means is a regulating groove or step.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 19, wherein the regulating groove or step is opposite and offset from the asymmetric bearing grooves.